

Washington Buddhist Vihara Monks Visit Neighbouring States

- *janapadacārikā* for their weal and welfare

The good lay devotees of the State of North Carolina had seriously thought of the statement in the Mahāmangala Sutta that the **sight of the Disciples of the Buddha was in itself something rewarding** [*samañānañ ca dassanam etaṃ maṅgalaṃ uttamaṃ*].

So on Friday, 3rd September 1999 Venerable Maharagama Dhammasiri, Head of the Washington Buddhist Vihara, together with Ven. Weihene Paññāloka Nayaka Thera, Ven. U. Kulita of Myanmar and Ven. Professor Dhammavihari left for North Carolina on the invitation of the Friends of the Vihara, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist. Transport facilities were completely taken care of by Namal Serasinghe who drove all the way from to drive the monks to and back from North Carolina all the way.

Our devout *dāyaka dāyikās* took good care of the monks during their three day stay. The two nights were spent in two different homes, accomodation being provided with utmost care and consideration, and in absolutely fitting manner. An entire community of Buddhists and non-Buddhists, Sri lankans and non-Sri Lankans participated. Americans, Chinese and Japanese as well as Hindus and Muslims, even in small numbers, were represented.

Activities ranged from provision of meals, each one in a different home. It was delightful to find such a large number of persons being received and treated with such loving care as guests by each family who hosted the ceremony. On every occasion, religious observances were meticulously observed, with avowal of faith and dedication through *tisarāṇa* and *pansil*. This was succeeded by *Buddha pūjā* and *Sanghika dāna*. Therafter the congregation generously shared the effects of the good deeds of giving performed with the departed near and

dear ones . Blessings were also invoked, in the name of the Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha, upon all grades of living, *devā*, *bhūtā* and *sattā*.

On all occasions where the venerable monks met the lay devotees, Venerable Dhammavihari as a visiting monk from Sri Lanka, presently spending the Rains Retreat at the Washington Buddhist Vihara was called upon to address the gatherings in English. He directed his appeal specially towards the children who were of all ages, both boys and girls. The topics dealt with covered a very wide range from Sri Lankan identity in a foreign land to Buddhist values relating to religion and culture, personal identity and peaceful coexistence, our awareness of the homeland from where we originated and the contribution the newer generations could be encouraged to make towards its future development and prosperity.

As the venerable monks blessed the congregation after the *dāna* on the last day and the good devotees paid their respects to the monks, everyone entertained in their hearts mixed feelings of joy and sadness that **even all joyous and good things invariably come to an end.**

Therefore be ye quick and work out your accomplishments without delay.
Vayadhammā saṅkhārā appamādena sampādeṭha.